

INVESTING IN EMPLOYEES PAYS BACK WITH BIG DIVIDENDS

ABOUT REX LUMBER (GRACEVILLE). In 1926, W. D. McRae established Rex Lumber Company, a family-owned business in Graceville, Florida. The mill started as a cypress sawmill and later became an oak flooring manufacturer. Since that time, the Graceville site has been completely redesigned and modernized into a high volume southern yellow pine sawmill. Currently, Rex Lumber operates three sawmills, located in Graceville, Florida; Bristol, Florida; and another in Brookhaven Mississippi. The three sawmills produce a total of 575 million board feet annually. Rex Lumber operates some of the most technologically advanced sawmills in the Southeast, and currently employs approximately 500 people. They are expanding by adding an additional sawmill in Alabama.

THE CHALLENGE. As a progressive and technologically advanced company, Rex Lumber understands that professional development is key to their continued success, growth strategy, employee satisfaction, and retention. Finding the right opportunities for employee engagement is difficult and expensive.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Key Rex Lumber employees participated in a three-day project management professional technical engagement promoting professional development sponsored by Northwest Florida Manufacturers Council (NWFMC), the local regional manufacturers association, in partnership with the University of West Florida, and FloridaMakes, part of the MEP National Network™. During the engagement, employees learned valuable tools and techniques to help them improve the success rate of their ongoing projects by applying standardized and proven project management principles. By better utilizing personnel, equipment, and resources, they are now able to complete their projects on time and within budget while maintaining excellent customer quality and satisfaction. The direct impact of the engagement to Rex Lumber included the ability to increase annual sales, project future growth of the business, and invest in plant and equipment to meet future demands.

"Through our membership at the NWFMC, our associates have been able to participate in multiple professional development events at no additional charge to our company. The feedback from attendees has been very positive. Additional skills were put to use quickly and allowed our associates to contribute at a higher level to increase the overall success of Rex Lumber."

-Jared Banta, Project Manager

RESULTS



\$1,000,000 in new or retained sales



\$25,000 in cost savings



\$4,065,000 in new investment



6 new or retained jobs

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